

A Review of the Literature: The Situation of Continuing Nursing Education in Iran

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Abstract: Background: Continuing nursing education is one of the ways of improving the quality of patient care. So, the evaluation of these programs will be very important. The present study has been designed and implemented with the aim of investigating the situation of continuing nursing education in Iran. Materials and methods: This study was a narrative review in a matrix approach that has been done by studying 16 articles in English and Persian. The search was performed in SID, IRANMEDEX, PUBMED, PREQUEST, CINHALL and Google Scholar data bases. Articles' screening was performed in 4 stages. Results: In 3 areas of needs' assessment and planning, implementation of continuing education plans and overall evaluation of programs, these studies evaluated their research environments. Most studies estimated general continuing nursing education in moderate level. Conclusions: Making changes in three areas of planning, implementation and evaluation with the participation of nurses seems to be necessary.

Keywords: *Continuing Education, Nurses, Review Study, Iran*

Introduction

Continuing education (CE) has achieved particular interest to health policies in the world as an inevitable necessity. Nursing CE has also absorbs more and more attention as a branch of CE of the medical community (1,2).

If the health system of a country fails to develop knowledge, abilities, and skills of its human resources, it would face difficulties in the improvement process of service quality (3, 4). Therefore, improving the theoretical and practical capabilities of medical team, especially of nurses, is considered an

efficient strategy and an appropriate investment (5, 6).

According to various sources, CE should be built on staff's previous knowledge, besides it adds new clinical information to them regarding the nurses' performance (7).

Since the nurses are the largest human resources in the health system and key operators in the hospitals' wards, thus their care quality has an effective role in improving the patients' care. Therefore, the promotion of knowledge and ability of the

personnel to provide safe services is considered one of the major challenges of nursing system (4, 8).

In fact, by training the nursing staff in hospitals, professional performances are reformed, while occupational hazards, medical errors and client complaints are reduced, so patient satisfaction increases and treatment and care indicators will enhance in hospitals (9-11). Carried out studies on the nurses' perspective in the effects of CE on efficiency, self-confidence, and nurses' awareness and skills have indicated positive results. Numerous studies worldwide have shown that CE is effective in improving care (12).

Most studies evaluated the effectiveness of CE with the lack of education and compared one technique or method with other methods. Although various studies have been conducted to assess the continuing nursing education (CNE) in the country; no review and scientific studies have been conducted to compare scientific proofs and documents with each other based on the studies of present challenges in the field of nurses' CE to let the researchers benefit from them as their research guideline.

To understand how the position of CNE in Iran is, strong and comprehensive review studies should be performed in this field to open the door to studies of specific

management at the national and international levels.

Materials and Methods

This study is a narrative review using a matrix approach in which the researchers are 4 including: nursing associate professor, assistant professor, specialist associate professor of infectious diseases, and nursing PhD student. Search did in SID, IRANMEDEX, PUBMED, PREQUEST, CINHALL and Google Scholar data bases. As a preliminary step in action research, they read 16 articles in English and Farsi relevant to continuing education in nursing, with no time limit and the used strategy (or-and). Keywords (in title and abstract) searched included: continuing education, nursing continuing education, continuing medical education, continuing professional education, continuing professional development, continuing education system, and continuing education system. Articles screening was performed in 4 stages.

The initial search found 50 articles that 16 articles were deleted due to duplication after initial examination and 11 were detected unrelated. The survey was conducted in terms of access to the full article that there was no access to the two papers. Finally, 6 other papers were deleted and 16 were studied after study of the articles (only articles examined that described the nursing continuing education Iran) (Table 1).

Table 1: Matrix pattern of step by step review performance

First step	Preparing questionnaire	How is nursing continuing education status in Iran?
Second step	Determining keywords	Continuing education, nursing continuing education, continuing education and nursing, continuing medical education, continuing professional education, continuing professional development, continuing education system, continuous education system
Third step	Determining review strategy	Published articles in journals and conference Full text in Farsi or English No time limit With any qualitative or quantitative research methods (historical)
Fourth step	Determining the search engine databases	Looking for texts in the library: University of Medical Sciences, Jahrom, Shi Database: AMEE- google scholar pubmed-disertation abstract-index to thesis google SID-IRANMEDEX-MAG IRAN
Fifth step	Screening	The initial review (obtaining 50 articles) Review in terms of repetition (deleting 15) access to the entire paper (deleting 2) The study of the title and abstract (deleting 11) The full text of this article (deleting 6)
Sixth step	Type of application	Checking the results, methods and strategies and integrating articles

Results

Of 16 articles reviewed, 2 articles were before 2000, 5 before 2010, and 9 articles during 2010-15. 12 articles were descriptive cross-sectional with a sample size (100-390) in which the majority were professional nurses with undergraduate and higher from 11 provinces with available sampling. One study carried out descriptively then interventional with 484 samples and 2 other studies with qualitative approaches with the participation of 26 and 23 professional nurses. A study was also conducted through systematic review.

In the aforementioned studies, various tools and mostly scholar-made ones were used. These studies were conducted in three areas including planning, implementation and evaluation. Most had evaluated the general condition of CNE at an average level (Table 2).

In total, more than 60% of participants in studies were female professional nurses who were married with over two years of experience. More than 50% were officially employed. They were taught CE 5-6 hours for a month.

Table 2: Characteristics and methodology of the studies

Author/year	Title	Goal	method	Result	Journal
NaserianB/2014	Continuing Education in Nursing from Nurses' View point	investigate the nurses' opinion about continuous Nursing Education	cross-sectional	It is necessary to evaluate the educational needs of nurses.	Strides in Development of Medical Education
Kavosi A/2013	Evaluation of retraining programs from the perspective of nurses in training hospitals of Gorgan, Iran	evaluate perspective of nurses about retraining programs	cross-sectional	persistent needs assessment before implementation of the program and reduction of nurses' workload	Journal of nursing education
Ebrahimi H/2012	Factors Influencing Nurses' Participation in Continuing Education Programs in Tabriz University of Medical Sciences	Determine the factors influencing nurses' participation in continuing educational programs.	cross-sectional	nurse managers should support and facilitate the nurses' participation in the programs	Iranian Journal of Medical Education
Vaezi A/2012	Explaining the experiences of nurses about post-registration nursing education context: A qualitative study		Content analysis	Due to lack of motivation, support and efficient educational surveillance, nurses are more likely to fail to participate actively in CE.	Journal of Medical Education and Development
Hoseinpour Z/2012	Concordance of Continuing Education Programs with the Principles of Adult Learning and their Effectiveness: Perspectives of Nurses in Mashhad University of Medical Sciences	determine the concordance of the continuing education programs with the principles of adult learning and the effectiveness of these programs from the perspective of nurses.	cross-sectional	continuing education program be revised in term of planning and implementing	Iranian Journal of Medical Education
Farmani p/2011	Viewpoints of the nurses in social security hospital of Karaj and Shahriar on nursing continuing education (2009).	Investigating the viewpoints of the nurses regarding continuing education	cross-sectional	Shortcomings in the planning and specially in needs assessment and educational plans satisfaction results were reported moderate with continuing education programs	Iranian Journal of Medical Education
Fahidy F/2011	Nurses' attitude toward supportive work climate affecting transfer of	evaluate the nurses' attitude toward supportive work climate	cross-sectional	supportive work climate affects nurses' ability to apply their knowledge and	Iranian Journal of Medical Education

	learning to job	affecting transfer of learning to job		new skills to their job	
Mohammad Hosseini S/2011	Perspective of nurses working in medical-training hospitals in Kohkiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province towards continuing education	determine the perspective of nurses, working in medical-Education hospitals, on continuing education programs.	cross-sectional	It is suggested to review the various parts of the programs and implement the requirement evaluation before any education progress	Journal of Hormozgan University of Medical Sciences
SHakoor M/2010	Nurse's Attitude to Ward Detering Factors of Participation in Continuing Nursing	evaluate deterring factors of participation in continuing nursing education	cross-sectional	workplace issues and time constraints lack of convenience, lack of relevance was more important deterring factors of participation in continuing nursing education	Scientific Journal of Hamadan Nursing & Midwifery Faculty
CHarkazi A/2009	The Viewpoints of Paramedics Employed in Golestan Province towards Continuing Education Programs	determine the viewpoints of paramedics employed towards Continuing education programs.	cross-sectional	Participants had a weak or very weak viewpoint toward programs	Iranian Journal of Medical Education
EbadiA/2008	Pathology of Continuing Educational Programs in Iran Medical Society	evaluate continuing education status in Iran medical society	Systematic review	all participants evaluated the program performance method as moderate level	Strides in Development of Medical Education
CHeraghi M/2007	Iranian nurses' perceptions of theoretical knowledge transfer into clinical practice: A grounded theory approach	Search of a model to enhance theoretical knowledge transfer into practice.	grounded theory	Insufficient continuous education	Nursing & Health Sciences
Mohammadi/2005	Continuous Medical Education from View of Nursing Personnel Working in Ardabil Hospitals	determine the state of Continuous medical Education from the view of the nursing personnel	cross-sectional	50.8% of nurses assigned a moderate value to CME. It seems necessary to reconsider the subjects and the execution procedures and perform needs analysis prior to this education.	Journal of Ardabil University Medical Sciences
Sharif F/2002	Needs assessment application and evaluation of nursing and midwifery continuing education program during the years 1999 to 2000 at Shiraz University of Medical Sciences	evaluate the nursing and midwifery C.N.E. programs executed	pre-posttest study	Continuous evaluation of C.N.E to figure out the different aspects of education process	Iranian Journal of Medical Education
Jalali R/1998	Continuous Nursing Education from Nurses' Point of View	<i>investigate the nurses' opinion about CNE</i>	cross-sectional	Increasing the number of staff, reducing work load and allocating a specific time to CE is conducive to improving learning conditions	Journal of Kermanshah university of medical sciences
Vali M/1986	Hospital nurses and nursing educators' attitudes and motivation to continuing education in educational hospitals affiliated to Ministry of Health and Medical Education	Demonstration of Hospital nurses and nursing educators' attitudes and motivation to continuing education in educational hospitals	cross-sectional	Both groups enjoyed positive motivation and high interest in participating in CE programs	Iranian journal of nursing

Discussion

Planning and Needs Assessment

In the study of Mohammadi 59.8% of nurses held that their educational needs were not evaluated before the conferences. In the study of Mousavi, 80% of nurses believed that the presented contents were not associated with their practical needs (13-15).

In the study of Kavousi, 67% of nurses believed that education authorities do not evaluate their educational needs before training programs. The results of the study of Farmani indicate that needs assessment in CE planning requires revision (16). In the study of Shakoor, 47% of respondents thought that training content did not make the nurses to be up-to-date in their profession (17). In the study of Fahidi only 52.3% of nurses have considered educational content adapted to their needs (18).

In the study of Ibrahimi, only 60% of nurses have considered educational content adapted to their needs and 50% have considered educational contents non-functional (19). Unscientific and inappropriate needs assessment is a finding that is achieved in the most studies including Ebadi's study which was carried out in systematic review (20). In the study of Hosseini, 63% of nurses have estimated CE highly convergent with their needs; in the same study, the mentioned reason was the successful coordination between the CE office and nursing management office of health assistance (21).

Reviewing these studies, it seems that CNE are not run based on assessment models and with the active participation of nurses. The study of Vali and Madah (1986) has also noted that educational programming is carried out without taking into account the real needs and practical opinions of clinical nurses. Thus, it seems that this issue has a background (22).

World literature states that the proper needs assessment is an essential part of improving the quality of educational programs and if this stage of education is not performed well, it couldn't be expected the education to be

Effective (12,23). Maybe that's why the majority of CNE emphasizes the understanding of the disease, not solving the problem of the clients (24, 25). In the reviewed studies, the nurses state that they often participate in CE which is in direct contact with the discipline, expertise type and department in which they work (24, 26, and 27). The need for change in educational planning of CE has been demonstrated in the studies regarding educational programs of physicians and dentists and other fields including CE in Iran like the study of Mehrparvar, Zobeiri, Amirnia, and Muosavi (28-31).

In foreign studies including the study of Dongfeng in China, Singchungchai in Thailand, Alghadami in Saudi Arabia, Chang in Malaysia and international study of Peck also need to improve planning educational programs (23, 32, and 35).

Implementation of Educational Programs

In the study of Mohammadi et al, 35% of nurses expressed participation and interaction in educational programs is in low level (13). Authors like Hosseini, Jalali, Mohammadi, and Farmani, the preferred methods of nurses were workshop training, small group training and long-distant training and finally, seminar, in the order of importance, while most training methods in CE are the seminar methods (16, 21, 36, and 37). Disregarding requests and priorities in educational planning can reduce effectiveness significantly.

The study of Naseri stipulated that workshops were the best method of training (38). Although scientific resources emphasize that the active learning methods are effective in boosting learning, and it is better to be replaced with traditional methods in CE, it seems that this scientific principle does not receive much attention.

In the study of Ebrahimi, Jalali and Shakoor that reviewed the barriers to successful implementation, the time limit (63-75%), improper selection of program times (68-73%) and high workload (74-88 %) were

listed as the major obstacles to the implementation of CNE (17, 19, 37). In the study of Naserian long time of programs (77%), improper selection of program time (77%), high working pressure and high workload (62%) had been announced the main barriers in nurses' participation (38). In the study of Vaezi, the high workload and lack of time were major obstacles (39).

In the study of Kovoosi, 67% of nurses strongly believed that the teachers had not been selected properly. 89% of nurses believed that high workload was the main obstacle in participation of CNE (15). In the study of Charkazi only 52% of participants assessed the teachers' abilities desirable (40).

Most studies have emphasized the importance of development in implementation of CE in hospitals, and suggested that for training personnel, teaching of guidelines and standards, per se, is not enough but activities that encourage participation, discussion and practical work is very effective (41, 42).

Overall Assessment of the Continuing Education Program

In the study of Mohammadi, 69% of nurses stated that the rules for continuing education need to be revised (13, 37). In a study, 45.5% assessed overall condition of CE in good level (16). In the study of Fahidi, only 56.8% of nurses were satisfied with the CNE (18).

In the study of Kavoosi, 37% of nurses reported that there is no control over education programs and 79% said no evaluation is performed before and after the training, 39% believed that these programs would not affect their clinical performances (15). In the study of Vaezi lack of effective

educational supervision (lack of evaluation of educational performance, lack of supervision over educational effectiveness, superficial supervision of CE) has been expressed as one of the challenges of CNE (39).

The results of the study of Hosseinpour showed that the effectiveness of training was not desirable (36). In the study of Charkazi, more than 50% of participants evaluated overall satisfaction as poor over the implementation (40). The study of Cheraghi emphasizes the ineffectiveness and inappropriateness of CE (43). However, in a study more than 50% of nurses were satisfied with CNE (21).

Several studies have also introduced challenges in CNE as an international concern (44), considering such challenges are crucial. Thus, it is clear that CNE is one of the phenomena which promotes clinical performance and consequently improves the professional status. Therefore, modification and improvements of CNE can be the basis of all developments in which the nursing profession would encounter in its present and future perspective.

It is worth noting that no study that examined the consequences of CE at the bedside was found.

Conclusions

The need to make changes in three areas of planning, implementation and evaluation seems necessary. But what should be considered in these developments is the participation of nurses in these stages. Performing field evaluation, applying active educational methods and considering on scientific needs assessment models, for the effectiveness of CNE seem necessary.

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